

Message Text

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SUBJECT: NSF/SFCP, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA GEOLOGICAL
PROJECT.

REF: TUNIS 4982

1. NSF PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION INDICATES THAT ALLEGATIONS BROUGHT AGAINST UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA GEOLOGY PROJECT IN GOT DIPLOMATIC NOTE AND AIDE MEMOIRE APPEAR TO BE UNSUBSTANTIATED.

TELECOMS WITH WILLIAM KANES (FROM TUNIS) ON 7/26 AND WITH 'SC OFFICIALS AT COLUMBIA, S.C. APPEAR TO INDICATE NO BREACH OF AGREEMENT BY USC TEAM. THE FOLLOWING CLARIFICATIONS OFFERED:

A. PRINCIPAL ACADEMIC SOURCE OF COOPERATING SCIENTISTS FROM TUNISIAN SIDE IS UNIVERSITY OF TUNIS, AS DETAILED IN LETTERS AND MEMOS TO MOHAMED FEKI, HEAD OF GEOLOGY DEPARTMENT.
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MENT. U.S. INVESTIGATORS APPARENTLY TRIED REPEATEDLY AND UNSUCCESSFULLY TO MEET HIM AND SECURE HIS ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN FIELD AND RESEARCH WORK. HE WAS REQUESTED TO SELECT TUNISIAN STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN FIELD ACTIVITIES AND WAS INFORMED ABOUT SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED FOR HIS

STUDENTS INTO GRADUATE PROGRAMS AT USC. THERE IS NO

RECORD OF ANY RESPONSE FROM FEKI. KANES TEAM SUPPORTED HOWEVER, MR. BEN AYED FROM GEOLOGY DEPARTMENT OF UNIVERSITY OF TUNIS AND MR. MEDASSI, A GEOLOGIST FROM ETAP.

B. COORDINATION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES WITH SERVICE GEOLOGIQUE (SG). ACCORDING TO USC, ALL ARRIVING U.S. SCIENTISTS WERE TAKEN AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY TO SG TO EXPLAIN THEIR RESEARCH OBJECTIVES. THEY OBTAINED FROM THE SERVICE GEOLOGIQUE ATTESTATIONS WHICH IDENTIFIED THEM AS WELL AS THEIR FIELD AREAS. COLLOQUIA, SEMINARS, FIELD TRIPS, AS WELL AS INFORMAL MEETINGS WERE HELD TO KEEP SG ABREAST OF SCIENTIFIC DETAILS OF THE PROJECT.

C. USC USE OF EXISTING SERVICES AND LABORATORY FACILITIES AT SG. MAIN FACILITY OF SG IS THE LIBRARY WHICH PROJECT PERSONNEL USE FREQUENTLY. ACCORDING TO USC, SG LACKS REASONABLY EQUIPPED LAB FACILITIES TO SATISFY THEIR OWN NEEDS OR THE PROJECT REQUIREMENTS.

D. THAT THE PROJECT STAFF PROMISED BUT FAILED TO BUILD A PALYNOLOGICAL LABORATORY AT UNIVERSITY OF TUNIS. USC PROJECT STAFF WAS TOLD BY SCIENCE FACULTY THAT LAB SPACE AND EQUIPMENT WAS ALREADY AVAILABLE AND ONLY TECHNICIAN TRAINING AND LAB DESIGN WAS NEEDED. DR. FRITZ CRAMER PROMINENT PALYNOLOGIST WAS BROUGHT BY USC TO TUNIS TO ASSIST. HE SPENT TWO MONTHS ATTEMPTING TO ESTABLISH LAB
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AND APPARENTLY LEFT FRUSTRATED WHEN IT PROVED IMPOSSIBLE TO OBTAIN REAGENTS AND TO IDENTIFY TECHNICIANS FOR TRAINING AND ASSEMBLING EQUIPMENT.

E. ALLEGATION THAT THE PROJECT FAILED TO PROVIDE TIMELY MEETINGS IN TUNIS TO PRESENT RESEARCH RESULTS TO TUNISIAN GEOLOGICAL COMMUNITY. ACCORDING TO USC, SUCH MEETINGS WERE HELD IN 1974, 1975, AND 1976. IN ADDITION, FREQUENT INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WERE HELD WITH TUNISIAN GEOLOGISTS TO SHARE RESEARCH FINDINGS AND U.S. EXPERIENCES.

F. ABOUT FURNISHING ROCK AND FOSSIL SAMPLES TO SG. SUCH SAMPLES ARE WORTHLESS UNTIL THEY HAVE BEEN ANALYZED AND CLASSIFIED ACCORDINGLY WHICH IS STANDARD SCIENTIFIC PRACTICE. USC STATES THAT THEY HAVE ALREADY SHIPPED HUNDREDS OF SAMPLES FROM THOSE THAT HAVE COMPLETED PROPER ANALYSIS AND CLASSIFICATION. OTHERS WILL BE SHIPPED AS SOON AS THEY ARE PROCESSED.

G. USE OF AZZEDINE AZZOUZ AS PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR. KANES IS PROJECT DIRECTOR. IN HIS ABSENCE DURING SEASONAL FIELD ACTIVITIES KANES APPOINTED ONE OF HIGH-

LEVEL PROJECT PARTICIPANTS SUCH AS NAIRN, ERHLICH, OR SCHAMEL TO BE IN CHARGE OF THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND RE-SEARCH COORDINATION. AZZOUZ WAS HIRED ONLY AS LOCAL ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSIBLE TO ARRANGE HOUSING FOR PROJECT PARTICIPANTS, LOCATE AND MAINTAIN OFFICE SPACE, MEETING INCOMING SCIENTISTS AND STUDENTS AT AIRPORT, PROVIDING LOGISTICS FOR FIELD PARTIES, ARRANGING FOR PACKING AND SHIPMENT OF ROCK SAMPLES, RESPONSIBILITY FOR CUSTOMS CLEARANCES OF PROJECT EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES. OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE KEEPING ACCOUNT OF DINAR EXPENDITURE, ARRANGING INSURANCE FOR MOTOR VEHICLES, THEIR REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE. IT IS OUR VIEW THAT SUCH COMPLEX LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE AND LOGISTICAL WORK COULD NOT BE ASSUMED BY A U.S. OR TUNISIAN SCIENTIST. THE UNCLASSIFIED

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CHOICE OF AZZOUZ FOR THE JOB BY KANES WAS BASED ON HIS SUCCESSFUL PERFORMANCE AS NSF CONTRACTOR SINCE 1966 AND HIS FAMILIARITY BOTH WITH LOCAL CONDITIONS AND NSF REGULATIONS.

2. ON THE BASIS OF OUR PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION NSF BELIEVES IT PREMATURE TO TERMINATE THE PROJECT UNTIL A MORE THOROUGH EXAMINATION CAN BE CONDUCTED. IN THIS REGARD, MR. SELIM SELCUK, NSF PROGRAM MANAGER, PLANS TO VISIT TUNIS O/A 15 AUGUST TO DISCUSS FURTHER DETAILS WITH AMEMB AND GOT OFFICIALS. SELCUK'S ETA WILL BE CABLED AS SOON AS TRIP SCHEDULE IS FINALIZED. VANCE

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